

REMARKS

Claims 1-9 are pending in the application. By way of this Amendment, Applicant has canceled claims 1-9 in favor of new claims 10-20.

New claim 10 substantially corresponds to claim 1 with the added feature that the first axis (i.e., the axis of the translational degree of freedom controlled by the first rod-like connection member) extends in the transverse direction of the vehicle. Support for this amendment is to be found in the drawings, particularly in the plan view of the suspension shown in Figure 2, from which it can be directly and unambiguously derived that the first axis y extends in the transverse direction of the vehicle. The same can be derived from Figure 5, where it is clearly shown that the first axis y is parallel to the direction along which the cornering forces F_c (which are by definition transverse forces) act on the wheel.

As far as new dependent claims 11 to 20 are concerned:

- new claim 11 substantially corresponds to old claim 2;
- new claims 12 to 14 are identical to old claims 3 to 5, respectively;
- new claim 15 substantially corresponds to old claim 6;
- new claim 16 substantially corresponds to old claim 7, from which it differs mainly in that it refers back to claim 13 or to claim 14, and not to any of claims 13 to 15, in order to avoid any multiple dependency;
- new claim 8 substantially corresponds to the combination of old claims 3, 4, 6 and 7;
- new claim 9 substantially corresponds to the combination of old claims 3, 5, 6 and 7;

and

- new claims 10 and 11 are identical to old claims 8 and 9, respectively.

For the following reasons, it is submitted that independent claim 10 patentably distinguishes over Matsuoka, applied to claims 1-9 in the § 102(b) rejection.

New Claim 10 is novel over Matsuoka, since this latter fails to disclose that the connection member arranged to control three degrees of freedom of the wheel-carrier:

- a) is a rod-like connection member, and
- b) controls a translational degree of freedom along the transverse direction of the vehicle.

The connection member 30 of Matsuoka, in fact, is neither a rod-like nor a transverse member (it extends in fact substantially in the longitudinal direction of the vehicle), whereas either of the connection members 26 and 30 controls only one degree of freedom of the wheel-carrier, instead of three degrees of freedom.

The differentiating feature that the claimed connection member arranged to control three degrees of freedom of the wheel-carrier (one translational and two rotational) is a rod-like member and controls a translational degree of freedom along the transverse direction of the vehicle offers the advantage that this connection member is only subject to torsion when a braking torque is applied thereto, whereas the longitudinal arm 30 of Matsuoka is subject both to torsion and to bending in case of braking. The technical problem underlying the invention can thus be envisaged in providing a lighter and then less expensive arm in an independent suspension system for a motor-vehicle. The person skilled in the art looking for a solution to this problem would not be led by any of the cited prior art documents to modify the suspension of Matsuoka so as to arrive at the suspension defined in new claim 10. In particular, he would not change the orientation of the connection member 30 of Matsuoka from longitudinal to transverse, as the suspension arrangement of Matsuoka has already two transverse connection members

(rods 26 and 28) and therefore requires the third connection member 30 to extend longitudinally in order to control the translational degree of freedom of the wheel-carrier along the longitudinal axis.

Thus, it is submitted that new claim 10 is novel and non-obvious over the prior art.

Furthermore, it should be noted with respect, that the arguments provided by the Examiner in support of the assumed lack of novelty of claim 1 in view of Matsuoka are not correct from a technical point of view. The Examiner believes that the rod-like connection member controlling three degrees of freedom of the wheel-carrier according to present claim 1 would be anticipated by the rod-like connection member 26 of Matsuoka. In actual fact, the rod-like connection member 26, as well as the rod-like connection member 28, are **only** able to control **one** respective **degree of freedom**, namely the translational degree of freedom along the respective axes. The remaining three degrees of freedom of the wheel-carrier are controlled by the connection member 30, which is however **not a rod-like** member, contrary to what is set forth in present claim 10.

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

/Brian W. Hannon/

SUGHRUE MION, PLLC
Telephone: (202) 293-7060
Facsimile: (202) 293-7860

WASHINGTON OFFICE
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